

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /057 W

-----016236 141555Z /45

R 141313Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9911

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

USINT BAGHDAD POUCH

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV

SUBJECT: KUWAITI PAPER TEMPORARILY SHUT DOWN FOR ADVOCATIONG
CABINET CHANGES

1. KUWAIT DAILY AL RAI AL AM WAS ONCE AGAIN SHUT DOWN (FOR ONE WEEK AS OF JANUARY 13), THIS TIME FOR ADVOCATING THAT THE NEW AMIR MAKE CHANGES IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. IN A COLUMN ON JANUARY 12, THE PAPER'S EDITOR IN CHIEF ASSERTED THAT, AFTER THE DEATH OF THE LATE AMIR, THE ACTING PR MIN MIN INFO, SHEIKH JABER AL ALI, HAD INSTRUCTED KUWAITI PAPERS TO REFRAIN FROM PUBLISHING COMMENTARY ON POSSIBLE CHANGES IN THE COUNCIL, BUT THAT THIS INSTRUCTION HAD BEEN VOIDED BY A SUBSEQUENT ARTICLE IN ANOTHER PAPER ALLEGING THAT THERE WOULD BE NO COUNCIL CHANGES. THE AL RAI AL AM EDITOR WENT ON TO CHARGE THAT SOME MINISTERS HAD BEEN "STAGNATING IN THEIR CHAIRS," THAT THE AMIR, WHEN HE WAS HEIR APPARENT/ PRIME MINISTER, HAD HAD TO CORRECT "MISTAKES" MADE BY

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MINISTERS, AND THAT IN THE CURRENT SITUATION, IN WHICH A PRIME MINISTER WILL HAVE TO BE NAMED IN ANY CASE, THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A CABINET RESHUFFLE SHOULD NOT BE MISSED.

2. COMMENT: WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE ORDER SUSPENDING AL RAI AL AM WAS INITIATED BY THE AMIR AND THAT, IN FACT, THE PRESS PREVIOUSLY HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO REFRAIN FROM

SPECULATION ON CABINET CHANGES, AS ASSERTED BY THE EDITOR. IN ISSUING THE ORDER, THE AMIR PRESUMABLY WAS INVOKING THE PRESS LAW OF 1961, AS AMENDED. IT CONTAINS NUMEROUS GROUNDS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SUSPENSION OF PUBLICATIONS WHICH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, ATTRIBUTE STATEMENTS TO THE AMIR WITHOUT PERMISSION, "SPREAD DISSENSION," ARE "INVOLVED.. IN POLITICAL MATTERS" OR HAVE A POLICY WHICH "CONTRADICTS THE NATIONAL INTEREST." EVEN IN THE ABSENCE OF PRESS SPECULATION ON CABINET CHANGES, THERE IS WIDE PRIVATE DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE NEW CABINET COMBINATIONS. THERE SEEMS TO BE A GROWING CONSENSUS, HOWEVER, THAT THE NEW AMIR IS IN NO HURRY TO RESHUFFLE. MEANWHILE, PRESS REPORTS INDICATE THAT HE HAS DECIDED TO RETAIN THE INCUMBENT STAFF OF THE OFFICE OF THE AMIR (AMIRI DIWAN), WHICH WILL PROVIDE EXPERTISE AND CONTINUITY IN THIS KEY OFFICE.
MAESTRONE

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Message Attributes

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Review Exemptions: n/a
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